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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic study of kindergarten through grade two classrooms was conducted of various sociolinguistic contexts in which young students were developing oral and written language competencies. Nonparticipant observations were conducted in both regular classrooms and Chapter I small group classroom settings. The observations were analyzed from a variety of perspectives spanning a range from whole language to a more conventional language arts approach to instruction. A coding system was developed to assist in the analysis of protocol data regarding literacy events, oral language interaction, and evaluation occurring in classroom settings. The data indicated that for the most part literacy lessons must have functional meaning for the child if positive learning is to occur. (An overview of the major aspects of a whole language approach to instruction, the responses of low-achieving students to whole language activities and recommendations for improving the literacy learning of young students are included, as are definitions and discussion of selected codes for analysis of protocol data.) (Author/HOD)

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Contextual Differences in Oral and Written Discourse During Early Literacy Instruction

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Abstract

An ethnographic study of kindergarten through grade two classrooms was conducted of various sociolinguistic contexts in which young students were developing oral and written language competencies. Non-participant observations were conducted in both regular classrooms and Chapter I small group classroom settings. The observations were analyzed from a variety of perspectives spanning a range from a whole language, to a more conventional language arts approach to instruction. A coding system was developed to assist in the analysis of protocol data regarding literacy events, oral language interaction and evaluation occuring in classroom settings. An overview of the major aspects of a whole language approach to instruction, the responses of low-achieving students to whole language activities and recommendations for improving the literacy learning of young students is included.

Contextual Differences in Oral and Written Discourse

During Early Literacy Instruction

The purpose of the study was to describe the different contexts created by teachers and students that influence the development of students' oral language interactional skills, especially those psycholinguistic or communicative competencies related to school success or failure, and the contexts in which young students are developing literacy. The very notion of "school success" itself was examined in this study, ranging from broad based but detailed accounts of learning from the student's perspective, (including his or her growing understandings and functional uses of literacy and concepts related to the communication of ideas in school settings), to more traditional criteria of school success.

The study focused upon observations of students in kindergarten, and grades one and two who were identified as "low achievers" and who were participating in a federally funded compensatory education program (Chapter I). Kindergarten students were observed in Chapter I full day kindergarten classrooms at two schools and in regular kindergarten classrooms and Chapter I extended-time classrooms at three other schools. Students in grades one and two were observed in regular classrooms and when participating in the Language Enrichment Communicative Skills (LECS) Project. The LECS project provided approximately 40 minutes of small group oral language and developmental reading and writing instruction, four days a week Mondays through Thursdays. On Fridays, LECS teachers worked on individual testing, makeup teaching, planning and attended inservice meetings.

The Chapter I Kindergarten and LECS projects were designed to promote a whole-language approach to literacy instruction (DeFord & Harste, 1982; Goodman & Goodman, 1981). Space does not permit anything but a very abbreviated account of whole-language learning. Briefly, a whole-language approach to learning emphasizes using language as it occurs meaningfully and functionally in the various social contexts outside of school, as well as within the classroom walls. Writing and reading, speaking and listening, are learned in "natural" interactive contexts and learned in combination with each other and with content as much as possible rather than being "taught" as separate processes. Language is not broken-down into abstract, non-meaningful parts in instruction. As stated by Goodman and Goodman (1981), "Three systems interact in language: grapho-phonic, syntactic, semantic. These cannot usefully be separated for instruction without creating non-linguistic abstractions and non-sense." (p.2) According to Edelsky, Draper and Smith (1983):

> The "whole language" classroom looks different from the "phonics" or "skills" classroom; there are no spelling books, no sets of reading texts with controlled readability, no writing assignments. Instead, the children's writing and authorship are integrated with a reading program of children's literature. Whole, meaningful texts are the instructional materials, not isolated words, sounds, or vocabulary-controlled "stories." In a "whole language" classroom, oral and written language must be functional, fulfilling a particular purpose for the language user. (p. 259).

From a whole language perspective, reading "readiness" instructional programs in schools are seen as a myth created by a sub-skills view of reading instruction (Goodman & Goodman, 1981), and young children are seen as gradually acquiring understandings of and proficiencies related to becoming active members of a literate society through meaningful interaction with print long before they begin school. Some writers talk of "emergent" literacy in recognition of developmental stages or patterns observed in beginning literacy

(Sulzby, 1981). Both Taylor (1984) and Doake (1985) describe home environments which are conducive to literacy development. It is believed possible to design school learning environments in which literacy is facilitated in a similar way to which it is fostered in home settings. Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) have shown "that young children are written language users and learners prior to coming to school (p. vxii)." Accordingly, "What educators need to know, . . . is how written language users come to experience and value the strategies involved in successful written language use and learning and how such knowledge can lead to further exploration and expansion of the human potential (p. xvii)."

Watson (1982) describes a whole-language program as one in which teachers read and tell stories to children, children read to themselves every day, predictable language books are used for teaching children to understand literature and to read, children write and read self-made books, reading and writing are taught together, students are given constant invitations to write for a variety of purposes on a daily basis, authentic communication occurs between the teacher and students, and cooperative peer learning groups are encouraged. Harste et al. (1984) discuss the concept of the "authoring cycle," defined as:

> a search for text in context, the negotiation of meaning—both between other language users in the literacy event, and within and across communication systems. . . The cognitive strategies we identify as constituting the **authoring cycle,** allow language users to learn written language **in the process of using written language.** The multimodel nature of literacy allows language users to shift perspectives and to alter their sociological and psychological stances during the course of their involvement in the course of the literacy event (p. xi).

While the Chapter I program design called for a whole-language approach to literacy, a wide variety of functional and interactional activities, and an emphasis upon oral language development, teachers were free to interpret and implement the program to a great extent according to their own pedagogical

philosophy and teaching style. In addition to emphasizing a whole-language approach to literacy, LECS teachers were inserviced in the sociolinguistic literature (Green & Smith, 1983; Gumperz & Hymes, 1972) stressing the importance of oral language interaction during classroom learning and instruction and the need for providing opportunities for sustaining and facilitative (or corrective) oral language feedback from teachers (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1978). Our data suggested that teachers may not be aware of the extent to which they are being led by the more linguistically competent students rather than encouraging the participation of the less linguistically competent students. Fivush (1983) showed that students' sociolinguistic performance within kindergarten classroom settings was related to teachers evaluations of their academic ability. Wilkinson and Spinelli (1983) found that students who were effective at making requests and negotiating appropriate responses related to academic tasks from their peers, tended to score higher in reading and mathematics. Therefore, LECS teachers were expected to provide opportunities for students to develop and extend their oral language skills as related to:

1) the ability to demonstrate to others (especially the teacher) that one understands or can perform, i.e. demonstrate that he/she is competent,

2) the ability to ask questions and receive help when needed from the teacher or peers,

3) to know when and how to get a turn and the attention from others when speaking,

4) the ability to interact conversationally on a topic, and

5) the ability to talk at length in an intelligible way on a topic and to be willing to do so in instructional contexts.

The concept, "literacy event," as defined by Cochran-Smith (1984) is integral to this study and perhaps best illustrates our interest in the interplay between oral and written language in the various contexts constructed by teachers and young students during the emergent literacy years:

> The notion of a literacy event is very imporant. It can help us see the contexts within which people use print, the ways they organize print for various purposes, the kinds of talk that accompany uses of print, and the nature and extent of social participation and interaction. Participants' comments on and references to literacy events can also help us to tease out the meanings that these events have for participants themselves, and can help us to identify the relevant contexts within which literacy events occur in given social groups. (p.258)

Ethnographic Research Design and Questions

Data were collected in the form of narrative protocols focusing upon ongoing student behavior in different settings, namely the regular classroom in kindergarten and grades one and two, in Chapter I extended-day kindergartens and in the Chapter I pullout situation. Only a small sample of the protocol data will be discussed in this paper. Three ethnographic assistants were trained to conduct classroom observations and write narrative protocols of each observation, using a method developed by Slaughter (1981) and Slaughter and Chilcott (1981). The observers, as non-participants, attempted to record the conversation and interaction of participants, both students and teachers, in as non-obtrusive a manner as possible. Tape recorders were used when appropriate to assist the ethnographer in recording segments of conversational interaction that appeared relevant to showing the sociolinguistic context of the instructional module. Observations were extended over a number of days in 23 different classrooms in six elementary schools.

Descriptions that might shed light upon the contexts in which children pre-identified as low achievers appeared to be successful or to fail, and lessons that appeared to be successful either for developing oral discourse proficiency or literacy, were of particular interest to the researchers. A very central question was: Why do young children fail or appear to fail in the first few years of school and what can be done to prevent that failure? An equally important question was: What are the achievements and learning strengths of young children, hitherto identified as "low" achievers, or "high" risk for failure, that can be elicited and used in building more appropriate instructional programs? A goal of the research was to provide "thick" descriptions of these contexts that would convey the meanings of instructional contexts from the eyeview of young children especially, as well as that of the teachers, a research goal that is described by Geertz (1972) and one that is considered of great importance for research on teaching (Berliner, 1983). According to Berliner (1983), ". . .one of the problems of research on teaching has been a failure to understand and control fully for the ecological settings in which one studies particular characteristics of teachers and students." (p. 3)

Research questions for focusing observations. Several research questions guided our observations from the beginning of the study; these questions were refined further, and new questions emerged from the field experiences of the ethnographers, conferences among the research team, and from the analysis of protocol data, as the study progressed. The initial questions guiding the study were:

1. What sociolinguistic contexts facilitated or inhibited interactive discourse between the teacher and students, or among peers on instructional topics or activities? How and when did students engage in extended discourse,

ask questions or otherwise influence the communicative context in the classroom?

2. What was the interplay between oral language interaction and literacy acquisition? Did teachers have separate "oral language" and "written language" instructional goals, or were these merged with "literacy" receiving the predominant focus?

3. What conception or theory of literacy, including both writing and reading, was being communicated to students, (either directly or implicitly), by teachers explanations, directions, evaluations, by the way in which tasks were designed and by the physical learning environment? Did this vary by site and type or service, i.e. small pullout group taught by a Chapter I Language Enrichment Communicative Skills teacher or regular classroom setting and teacher?

4. What were the students' responses to the various instructional contexts in terms of success or failure, approval or disapproval, attention or inattention, enjoyment or boredom, etc.?

5. What are some of the various "activity structures" (a term used by Berliner, 1983), to be found in instructional settings where teachers were attempting to apply a "whole language" (Goodman & Goodman, 1981) and developmental approach to literacy rather than a more traditional skills based approach?

Emergent research questions. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) indicate that in ethnographic research, analysis and data collection are carried out in concert throughout the period when the data ae being collected. One reason for conducting an ethnographic study is to explore hitherto vague or unknown domains. Marshall (1984) argues that when researchers are challenging

entrenched paradigms, as we are challenging a formalistic skills-based approach to language arts instruction in schools, and exploring a new paradigm, e.g. the whole language approach, "we must devise research designs for exploring openly, without the constraints of pre-determined theory." (p.26)

Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that ethnographers engage in on-going "memoing" throughout the data collection period in order to refine and sharpen hypotheses and concepts that develop after experience in the field has begun. The memoing process was often done after periodic meetings of the research team in which observations and experiences in the field situations were shared and discussed. We found in our research effort that such meetings were crucial to developing a conceptual framework for interpreting the data, and for more highly focusing observations. Ethnographers were asked to summarize and develop hypotheses after completing a written protocol of each classroom observation. Therefore, a major purpose of an ethnographic study, in addition to providing rich descriptions, is to generate hypotheses regarding the relationships between patterns observed and hypotheses which suggest "what it is" that is of importance in studying a domain of interest.

Due to limitations of space, only a few "emergent" hypotheses or research questions will be stated. Indeed, the emergent hypotheses are better integrated into the results sections of a study, as they are in a sense, an important part of the findings of a study. Examples of emergent hypotheses are as follows:

1. It was an expectation of the researchers that LECS teachers would focus at least part of their instruction on attempting to elicit elaborated discourse from students. Webb and Weick (1984) suggest that: "Investigators use expectancy as a control . . . What people don't do, who isn't in a network, practices that weren't made, are data and they become data because of the

a priori expectations that existed" (p 214). Engaging students in sustained oral discourse where the student would elaborate on his or her ideas or experiences did not occur as often as expected. In fact it was relatively rare. Students asked fewer questions than expected. Indeed, eliciting student questions or oral discourse did not seem to be a part of the teachers' explicit or "hidden" agenda with some significant exceptions.

2. In our analysis of the ongoing stream of events in the classroom or LECS centers, we distinguished a variety of Instructional Activity Structures. Berliner (1983) stated: "Particular activity structures have characteristics that distinguish them from other activity structures and impose constraints on the behavior of the members of the activity structure." (p.3) Unlike Berliner, we did not code all activity that was not a part of the formal agenda as "transition" time: rather, we looked at some of the "activities" as informal time. We know from the research, that both oral language discourse (Cazden, in press), and adult-child interaction during the early literacy years (Denny, 1983), is often richer outside of formal instructional contexts than within them. Emergent research questions are: "Is the highest level of oral language discourse, in terms of length of utterance and authentic or functionally meaningful language use pertaining to a topic, coming from the informal times or from the instructional agenda? From what direction does the richest or highest level of child oral discourse flow, from teacher to student(s), from student(s) to teacher, or in peer sharing situations?

3. Some of our observations indicated that the students benefited from time and space within the classroom organizational structure to figure out how to accomplish tasks, and to obtain or give help to peers. We therefore

hypothesized that it is important to observe a child in a sequence of activities in order to detect delayed effects.

4. We observed young children going to extraordinary lengths to "satisfy" teacher expectations, even if the task didn't seem to make sense (to either the child or the observer). Children would upon occasion change a correct response in order to conform to the demands of the classroom.

Limitations of the study. The narrative data presented in this paper, as well as an interpretive framework and the coding system, (to be described below), used in the analysis of protocol data, are from an ongoing ethnographic study in Chapter I and regular classrooms. A major part of the study up to this point has been in collecting observational data and in the construction of the coding system.

Due to the complexity of the research questions and the extensiveness of the database, only a highly selected sample of the data will be presented herein. The database is very rich and we expect to be able to offer a more extensive and comparative analysis of the full range of the data in future reports. These data, like those of other ethnographic studies, were voluminous. The large number of observations that were written up by the ethnographic assistants and analyzed by the entire research team provided extensive examples of literacy events and views of children's developing oral and written language. While some ethnographies focus on the minute details of one classroom or even one lesson, the strength of this study is the extensiveness and richness of the data collected in a variety of classroom settings. From the information collected, data were triangulated to describe patterns of langauage within the classrooms and to present teachers' implementation of literacy at school. Guba (1978) writes of the importance of triangulation, "When a series of bits of evidence all tend in

some direction, that direction assumes far greater believability. As statistical means are more stable than single scores, so triangulated conclusions are more stable than any of the vantage points from which they were triangulated" (p.64). From the triangulated data of this study the themes and hypotheses were generated.

A Coding System for Studying Classroom Discourse and Emergent Literacy

A coding system was devised for the anlaysis of protocol data based upon categories emerging from careful and systematic observation and discussion, including discussions during site analysis meetings where the ethnographers at the various sites described their studies (the coding system is found in Appendix A). The coding system was modified and enlarged as needed when the first series of protocols from a variety of sites were coded. Then as a group the four researchers coded selected protocols and reached consensus on the coding of specific features of the protocols.

The coding system used meaningful abbreviations for the concepts that were coded to facilitate easier analysis as recomended by Miles and Huberman (1984). The major categories were in the areas of **literacy, oral language interaction and evaluation of learning and instruction.** We attempted to limit the coding system to 60 items or less so that it would not become unwieldy; therefore, we did not use a specific code for every possible behavior but rather attempted to group behaviors, as appropriate according to group consensus, under a single code. The coding system focused analysis upon the features that were important to the questions asked in the research study, yielding detailed

information (or confirmation) where it was needed for purposes of the study. A coding system also provides a format for a research team to develop a more precisely shared conceptual framework in observation as well as being useful in analysis. It facilitates the development of a common language among researchers and allows a principal investigator to share in greater depth his or her theoretical base for the study. Definitions for some of the categories of the coding system are found in Appendix B. If an important but isolated event appeared in the data for which there was not a code the analyst noted that along with the coded data on the form used for recording the codes (Appendix C).

What problems and what was the decision-framework that was involved in using the coding system to analyze the protocol data? First there is the problem of semi-duplication of codes listed under Literacy or Oral language. Sometimes a code that had been devised to describe a literacy event could be used to describe an oral language event, or vice versa. In that case we agreed that we would use the code but would change the prefix of the code to LO (literacy-oral language) or OL so that we would not need to enlarge the coding system too much. We did not have a code for "instruction" (which would have been simpler) because we wanted to break down instruction into more refined descriptions. Sometimes several codes applied to the same behavioral segment. In these cases, codes could be used in tandem.

Some of the codes reflect the broader context of instruction—these codes necessarily had to be assigned after the protocol was read through. This is especially true of codes designating the kind of task, e.g. tasks involving functional literacy, or formal instructional tasks in literacy, (L 5 & L 6),

contexts that do or do not facilitate oral language interactive discourse, (O 9 & O 10), successful or unsuccessful lessons or activities, (E 14 & E 15), or the more general category, situational-contextual influence (L 19). Sometimes it was difficult to decide whether an instructional context represented a functional (real life) use of literacy or a formalized instructional module: in these cases, we coded the category that seemed the best fit followed by the contrasting category. In this way we avoided oversimplification of the problem of distinguishing between a whole language and a more traditional approach to literacy. (Since many of the teachers were more or less trying to implement a whole language program for the first time, the data from the protocols showed a mixture of whole language and skills based methods.)

The question of successful versus unsuccessful lessons was perhaps the most difficult to apply. We used these categories sparingly, where the lesson seemed a particularly apt representation of a successful or unsuccessful attempt from the participant's perspective, or where the ethnographer could show that the data demonstrated a mismatch in discourse from the one that "may" have been intended from either the teacher or student perspective, and what actually occurred.

Of what value to the study was the coding system? Coding is a laborious, time-consuming process, and as mentioned by Miles (1984), ethnographic researchers often find the coding process unpleasant. Coding is useful in team research as a method to reach consensus in the use of terminology and to verify patterns in the data for which hypotheses had been developed; coding can also be useful in detecting hitherto unrecognized patterns. It is important, however, that the codes remain tied to the context from which they were derived and not used prematurely, if ever, for quantification of the data. Harste, Burke and

Woodward (1981) state, "Precision in measurement can never be put ahead of validity in measurement, and that is the choice." (p. 209) For example, they showed that the notion of response time varies with the individual child's normal response time. In other words, what should be counted as a pause for one student, may be counted as an immediate response for another: the same amount of time, e.g. 5 seconds is interpreted in different ways. The purpose of this study was to provide "thick" descriptions of variations in the instructional contexts in which young children are learning to read, write and interact, and to "tease-out" relationships between teacher and student views and attitudes towards literacy and sociolinguistic interaction and early school success or failure, rather than to provide quantitative data.

The coding system we developed was also useful in helping the ethnographers to focus upon aspects of interactional behavior that were relevant to the study. One of the ethnographic assistants felt that her observational skills, narrative protocol writing skills and efficiency in terms of the time required to write-up classroom observations was vastly improved in the second year of the study after the coding system had been jointly developed by the research team. The length and quality of the narrative protocol data produced improved without any reduction in the quality of the interpretative comments found in the ethnographic summaries. (Only one ethnographic assistant continued to conduct classroom observations during the second year). While added experience may have contributed to observational skill, the coding system provided a way to communicate and share meanings among all members of the research team and may be especially useful for team ethnography. However, as Marshall (1984) warns, "Team research should be encouraged, but not necessarily with the goals of achieving a consensual generalizable picture of organizational life with

recommendations on how to fix up problems." (p.31) In other words, one should take care that through this more focused observation, other insights of equal or more importance are not lost.

The role of the coding system in data synthesis is problematic. We prefer thematic analysis (a different level of analysis that interprets various activity structures and events in the classroom in a way that relates more to the "emic" or particularistic situation being analyzed) to data synthesis via seeking pattern solely through coding. In studies of classroom contexts we found that the concept of "activity" structure was especially useful in analysis. To be more specific, in studies of early literacy a merging of the construct "activity structure" (Berliner, 1983) with that of literacy event (Cochran-Smith, 1984), appears to be a useful unit of analysis.

In our study we used the coding system more as a tool for refining the analysis of the narrative protocol data, than as the "primary" analysis of the import or meaning of the events, or indeed selecting those events that we thought worthy of discussion in our research reports. The ethnographic summaries, and summaries written by second readers of the protocols were more useful for constructing an account of the data than the codes, per se. However, the coding of selected protocols and events within protocols, can be extremely useful in enabling researchers to get a "handle" on the data, and to focus discussions among researchers that enrich or enlarge interpretation. In other words, coding and thematic analysis and interpretation are different levels of analysis that can be mutually supporting and also serve to counterbalance one another.

Variations in Classroom Discourse Contexts in which Young Students are Learning about Language and Literacy: Interpretive Description

Context is viewed as being constructed by the interactants in a situation (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Cook-Gumperz, 1977). In classrooms, the context includes not only the immediate linguistic and paralinguistic interaction, but the past history of interaction among the participants. Shared background knowledge and beliefs and assumptions about shared and unshared background knowledge are also part of the context. The setting itself, (e.g. the physical environment, classroom organization and management, group composition and size, etc), as well as the topic, subject matter or content being studied, and the kinds of print and textual materials used is part of the context.

The importance of contextual variables for understanding how literacy develops and is learned is increasingly emphasized in the literature (Applebee, 1984; Erickson, 1984; Iannoccone, 1984). In order to understand how literacy is learned in school settings, it is important to identify both the language learner's and the teacher's assumptions (Harste et al., 1984, pp. 4, 7).

According to Harste et al. (1984), too often in classrooms "the significant creative decisions have been made by the teacher. The student is left simply to recreate the decreed text order and to copy the print" (p. 6). But can young children make creative and instrumental decisions regarding their own oral and written language learning? Harste et al. (1984) affirm that they can, stating:

> Children, we argue, attend to the same cue complexes we attend to. They do not outgrow strategies. There are, in that sense, no developmental stages to literacy but rather, only

> experience, and with it fine tuning and continued orchestration. While we didn't "discover" invented spelling, what we did discover is that the process which undergirds the generation of invented spellings is the very process which undergirds our own spelling efforts. (p. x).

Harste et al. (1984) suggest that, "What we ought to do, curricularly, is to establish an environment in which the child can 'experience' and 'come to value' the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic activities we associate with successful language use and learning" (p. xii). This is best done by providing a variety of "open-entry student activites" in literacy (Harste et al., 1984, p. 14). Students need room to test their own self-generated notions about literacy and teachers need to be able to observe and interpret the student's growing awareness and skill in using literacy for functional purposes.

Observational data from various classroom literacy contexts will be described and interpreted in the following section. These contexts will be examined for clues regarding teachers' and students' assumptions about literacy and literacy learning, the kinds of participation styles that are being learned by students during literacy lessons and for the relationship between the degree of "openness" of literacy learning provided for students and their responses, not only to the literacy tasks but also regarding their own successes or failures as authors, readers and oral participants within the classroom.

In the data described below, protocol data are referred to by school site, date, and page number. Dialogue is recorded in transcriptual formats, with T indicating the teacher, and other initials indicating individual students. Names of persons and schools were changed to preserve anonymity. Choral responses are marked CR, and other plural responses are indicated by SS. Transcriptions

that were not clear and had to be "guessed" at we placed in parentheses, ( ), and uninterpretable audiotaped data was indicated by empty parentheses. Descriptive material within the protocol dialogue is marked by brackets[]. Gaps in the activity stream observed are indicated by a broken line, (i.e., - - -). Pauses are indicated by ellipses.

Examining Literacy Contexts.

There were a number of activity structures that could serve to elicit verbal discourse from students, while at the same time teach students how to participate in literacy lessons and to interact with print and meaning. Several of these structures are described below.

Shared storytelling between teacher and students. In the following protocol from the Silver School data (2/7/84), Mrs. Abby, the Chapter I specialist is leading a small group of six first grade students in telling a story from a wordless story book, **Pancakes for Breakfast** (DePaola, 1978). Wordless picture books are used in many classrooms where students are beginning readers or are having difficulties learning to read. Wordless books emphasize that books have meaning and that reading can be enjoyable. They also provide students the opportunity to view themselves as readers while enhancing their sense of story (Applebee, 1978) through oral, artistic, and written experiences and supporting their developing knowledge of how books are read (Clay, 1979). A functional purpose for "reading" the book is mentioned at the beginning for performing this task by the teacher, and taken up by two students (later we asked the teacher whether or not this functional purpose was carried out and found that it was hypothetical, not an actual purpose of the shared story telling experience):

T: O.K., if we really do this, we could learn how to make pancakes.
J: Could we learn how to make them for real?
T: We. . . We could make them for real if we read the book and learn how to make them.
P: I know how to make em!
(Silver School Study, p.2).
[Someone says slurp, slurp,] P says butter and syrup, L contributes milk and goats, J says sugar

After this discussion, with the teacher interjecting guiding questions, he names things that go into making pancakes. The story telling event progressed with the teacher telling most of the story but eliciting children's responses by asking leading questions about the action sequences in the story that require one word or clause level responses. In this we see what Rosenblatt (1984) would call an "efferent" stance towards text, one where the reader enters text to come out with facts. A few of the responses were choral responses. The teacher tended to keep the children on task, ignoring students responses that diverged from the storyline even if related to topics or lexical items brought up in the story. Taylor (1984) showed that when parents read with children, they allow the child to diverge from the agenda but that when teachers read with children, even in informal settings, the teacher's own agenda seemingly dominates the literacy event. The one place where the teacher responded to a child's divergent response for instance was when one of the very lowest achieving students spontaneously sounded out the beginning sound of a word that came up in the story. We noticed that teaching skills in context was often part of the teacher's agenda in LECS classrooms.

T: Let's see what happens next. There she goes out to the...
Choral Response: Barn.
T: She goes out to the barn or the chicken house.
J: To get some eggs.
( )

J: ( ) there babies in there.
T: ( ) there? Have they hatched yet? ( )
C: My cousin, he had a little egg. He got a stick and pushed it (and it cracked).
T: Oh. (Now she has the eggs) Now what is she going to look for? ( )
T: Milk. .
L: "M"
T: You're right, Louis, it starts with an "M"
(Silver School, p.4)

As the story progressed, the teacher changed the structure of these questions to "prediction" type questions which elicited more divergent and spontaneous responses from the students. At this point the student's stance towards the text changed from that of an efferent one mentioned above to that of an aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1984). Notice the students' increased involvement in the plot of the story when the prediction strategy was used.

T: What's she thinking about?
B: She's hungry.
J: She wants to eat!
T: She's imagining how she's going to put the eggs. . .
C: Stir.
T: Stir. . . and she's going to do like Philip said, pour the batter. . . then what's she going to do?
B: Throw it.
T: She's going to flip the pancakes. . .
CR: ( ) Pancakes.
T: That's what she's imagining. [At this point in the book, the old woman gets home and finds all the other ingredients have been eaten by the cat and dog.]
B: Not any more. They in trouble.
J: Look, the cat drank all the milk. ( ) The dog ate all the stuff.
T: Who got all the eggs' you suppose?
C: The dog.
( )
B: You should have take . took the dog and the cat.
C: Outside.
C: I would a killed em.
(Silver School, p. 7)

Collaborative story retelling and writing in cooperative learning groups. A whole language approach to instruction emphasizes student self-initiated and

self-directed learning within a supportive social context where student collaborative learning efforts are encouraged and promoted through classroom organization and management. According to Johnson, Johnson, Holubec and Roy (1984) cooperative learning tends to produce higher achievement, as well as an improved social climate in classrooms, partly because "the discussion process in cooperative learning groups promotes the discovery and development of higher quality cognitive strategies for learning than does the individual reasoning found in competitive and individualistic learning situations" (p. 15). They state that in order to use cooperative learning groups effectively in the classroom, teachers must monitor student's performance, provide task assistance, and sometimes directly teach cooperative learning skills (Johnson et al., 1983). One function of the teacher's role that we observed was to keep the group together and moving along in the same direction. This may be done in a very subtle fashion, allowing students a great deal of control over the task, especially when the task itself is designed as an "open entry" task.

In the following excerpt from a protocol of a regular first grade classroom where the teacher is attempting to use whole language strategies in instruction, (Silver School, 5/16/84), students are engaged in writing a play for a Readers' Theater. One student, Willis, is observed writing down the script. The other students in the group are contributing items to be written down as well as advice about how to write, such as calling out the beginning letter in a word. The teacher is prompting the group process by elicitations such as "What happens next?" and "Give him ideas." Children use environmental print as well as their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships in spelling:

> The teacher is interrupted briefly and leaves the group which continues working uninterrupted. The writer and others repeat 'little' several times which Carmen may have taken as a cue to spell it. She locates this word on the LRH recipe chart on the far end of the room

from where they are sitting and spells it out loud. All of the lines continue to be repeated several times, sometimes by the same child. The next dictated line is, "The dog ran into the kitchen." One child says, 'duh' and another spells the whole word, d-o-g. (p. 8 of 16)

In the next segment, the students negotiate which version of text to include in their play, learning not only how to compose text but how to resolve conflict:

Louis: The dog came into the kitchen.
Willis: I'm writing, 'The dog ran toward the kitchen.'
T: Does that sound good to you guys?
CR: Yeah.
T: Tell him to write it, then.

[They do this rather rapidly, adding 'The cat ran toward the kitchen' and 'The mouse ran toward the kitchen.']

Carmen: And they ate the cake when the Little Red Hen was hanging up the clothes.
T: w w w wait, say that again.
[Carmen repeats what she has just said.]
T: Oh, that's the way you would write it, huh? That would be different. . . Talk to the people in your group and if they decide, that's how they want it to end, that's how you can make it. Talk to them.
Several: Yeah. Yeah.
Willlis: No, no, no. [This back and fourth game-like play, not really attending to the decision, goes on for several second.]
W: I'm goin to decide. [Exaggerating his thinking posture.]
T: Willis, who's writing this story? You're recording the story, but who's writing? Whose story is it?
Several: Ours.
T: All of you guys, so you have to (decide), O.K.?
W: Raise your hand if you think I shouldn't do that. [counts]
T: What is it?
W: Three people to three people.
T: Three people to three people. What are you going to do now?
W: I don't know. It's a tie.

The teacher is about to offer a suggestion, but the children begin taking another vote. This time, Carmen's version loses. Willis says, "Oh goody." and begins immediately to write the standard version down. The teacher, meanwhile, asks Carmen to dictate her version with the plan in mind to type two endings to the story. As she dictates it to him, she expands it considerably from the original one she has proposed.

Willis is becoming tired of all the writing, and decisions are made based on that consideration. This effect, that of writer fatigue, is not unlike a factor in adult writing. The teacher reminds them that Willis has a helper, Brian, who could take over and not too much further on, he does. The teacher allows them considerable time to come to some conclusions about content, but finally asks that the last two lines be read to him. He then asks them a brief question about getting all the characters mentioned and encourages them that they are almost at the end. Louis begins saying the dialogue in his tiny voice again.

Carmen: Louis likes to be the mouse.
T: [Repeats this]
Brian: [interrupting his writing] Uh huh. He likes to sound like a chipmunk.

The teacher stops them and moves them to another table to do the very little bit that needs to be finished. (pp. 8-10)

Student initiated, contrasted to teacher controlled literacy practice. Often, in contexts where children were self-initiating literacy practice and exploration, control by the teacher of the learning process was, by degrees, being turned over to the student. Some of the Chapter I environments could be seen as transitional from skills based toward a whole language model and because the thinking of the teacher was evolving, situations when children had control of processing their material and those where control was maintained or regained by the teacher, occurred together, or paralleled each other. The contrasts were sometimes clearest between pull-out situations and the regular classrooms.

Colbalt School data (12/6/83 & 11/28/83) provide examples of control contrasts in both pull-out and classroom environments. In the first protocol below, LECS children have just completed some unfinished business from the day before:

All of the children are sitting down on the rug and begin reading in books they have chosen from the bookshelf. There has been no instruction to do so. The interest in several books they are looking at is very keen, especially one that Kathy has started to read out loud. The next ten minutes are spent in this informal and spontaneous

activity. It eventually structures itself around Kathy reading her entire book to the class. Jose loves it especially and obviously knows a great deal about the story, part of it by heart. The others seem freshly interested in it. The teacher is very appreciative of what, we silently signal to each other, is a very significant event in the literacy development of the children. Sammy arrives late to class and the teacher motions for him to sit down. This causes a little break in the reading, so the teacher asks Kathy if she is tired of reading. She isn't and goes on reading.

Kathy gets stuck and can't get her reading to make sense. The teacher tells her to go back and start over. Jose, using his own experience with the story, and the context, is able to help Kathy read the sentence. The children are seeing a picture and they make a guess about mud being a part of the story. Jose, knowing the storyline, tells them it isn't mud, but cement. Marco is so interested that he has moved as close to Kathy as he can get. He is looking at a picture in the book.

M: God! Look how many people!
R: God!

[Marco and Jose both say something not recorded in the narrative. Kathy continues her reading.]

T: The word is huge (to Kathy).
M: There's a big (jack-hammer).
J: [Makes a jack-hammer noise.]
M: [Makes a similar noise.]
T: Now we can have our puddle.
M: [He's looking at the print.] That's not puddle, it starts with a 'B'.

As Kathy finishes the book, she gets stuck again and the teacher helps her make sense of the sentence by reading the rest of the sentence. When the story is completed, the teacher resumes control and proceeds with what had been on her agenda—reading **Stuart Little.** She asks what Stuart was and several children reply, "mouse."

T: Oh, no. He just looked like a mouse. He was a person. Remember he could talk, and his mother and father talked to him.

After a brief teacher-response to a child's question, "How come everything has a name?" - - - the teacher begins to retell the story up to the point where Stuart gets caught up in the shade and everyone has to look for him. She lets Sammy help her retell the story. At this point the children get so interested in the pictures that they begin to crowd around the teacher too closely and she tells them that she won't show them to them; that she wants them to "see the pictures in your heads."

In the above protocols, we see contrasts between an instance of child-controlled interaction and literacy practice and teacher initiated and controlled book sharing. Kathy's choice and the pictures illustrating the text seemed to be of intense interest to the group. The story the teacher shares is of apparent equal interest, the pictures as well, but the rules change abruptly in the interest of teacher control. As the exchanges between the students and their teacher come more under her direction, there is evidence that the students' interest and engagement drifts in and out (Cobalt, 12/6/83, pp. 15-17).

Sharper contrasts are seen between Chapter I pull-out settings where the specialist is employing some whole language techniques and the regular classroom where there are many fewer instances when students are actively encouraged to assume some control of their own learning. Student control may be in direct conflict with a skills based, teacher-directed model, as indicated in the segment below from a third grade classroom at Cobalt School (11/28/83). Students, including two Chapter I students, are seen responding to teacher initiated tasks. This example shows how a narrow focus on "subskills" directs the children's attention away from the sense of story and meaning in text that using "big book" stories could facilitate, to a set of performances where children are being evaluated for their ability to recite correct responses to questions about vowel sounds and to read sentences aloud. Harste et al. (1984) mentions that "any literacy event provides a variety of demonstrations which are available to language learners through the actions of the participants and the artifacts of the process" (p. 180). Some of these facilitate language learning and others are dysfunctional in terms of the potential demonstrations available to the student and the view of literacy presented to the child (Harste et al., 1984, pp. 181-183).

In the following instance, the teacher's focus upon form rather than the meaning of the text directs the students attention to giving correct responses rather than engaging their attention about the meaning of, or strategies used, to understand the text. Previous research in reading, especially in the early seventies (for an example see Dzama, 1974), indicated that often children are not helped in learning to read by practicing phonics subskills since they often cannot adequately apply the "subskills" task unless they already have the ability to perform the entire reading task holistically. Furthermore, focusing on structural aspects of text may divert the reader's attention entirely from the meaning. The emphasis upon "correctness" of responses regarding reading "subskills or subcomponents" carried over to the teacher's directions regarding the workbook assignment where the focus was on "telling" the students what to do rather than "thinking through" with the children's active participation what the task was all about:

> As the five children sit down in the center, Marcia arrives and sits down. The first task is to go over a set of word cards. Marcia seems to be saying most of the words after they are being said by the group in a way that suggests that she is not focusing her attention on the word as written, but as said by the group. It is not clear whether she could say them if made to look at them idividually.
>
> The children in reading wait very quietly for the teacher to collect the rest of the materials that she needs for her lesson: the publisher's big book for this level and the manual.
>
> The other children in the room are working very quietly. The teacher writes **rain** on the board.
>
> T: Raise your hands if you can tell me the vowel letters.
>
> The children respond when called on with the vowel sound. She then discusses the difference and what she meant, briefly. The next word is **hay**. Lucia reads correctly. She is then called on to read the sentence, "John likes to play with his train." The teacher asks for the long 'A' sound in the appropriate words. When the next child reads the next sentence, Marcia mouths it as it is read ,she may be lip-

syncing.. For the next sentence, "A piece of clay got stuck in the drain," a boy gives a miscue and the teacher asks Marcia, "What do you think this says?" She gives no response or it was not picked up. Lucia reads, "We have to stay on the main road."

The teacher changes the page again. "Sometimes we put two words together to make a new word. They are called compound words." As they do this lesson, Lucia's hand goes up very quickly and when called on, gives the expected response. Marcia continues mouthing the sentences. When called on to separate day and time, she is called on without raising her hand. She gives the correct response, but as they continue with the exercises, Marcia loses interest and begins playing and looking at her several bracelets. She reconnects, but only briefly, then begins saying the alphabet softly to herself. She goes back to mouthing behavior and it is still impossible to tell if she is looking at the words or listening to answers and repeating them.

Marcia begins to open her reading book and is reprimanded by the teacher. She then opens her workbook. The teacher reads the directions out loud, repeats what they are to do and then reads each word they will need. Marcia begins and looks at the children's work next to her. **Clay** and **tray** she seemed to have classified on her own. For others, she checks with her neighbors. The teacher doesn't recognize one of the pictures on one of the pages. She looks in her manual and then gives directions for seatwork that will be done when the children return from LECS. Marcia doesn't seem to be connecting with what the teacher is saying. They are to do four workbook pages. The teacher reads the directions for each page out loud. The children put their things away and leave the room for LECS. (pp. 3-5)

In the LECS program that day the children and teacher went to the library. They return previously checked-out books and each child chooses another one or two to check out in the teacher's name for the library shelf in the Chapter I room. In the brief exchange given below the Chapter I teacher demonstrates her support for the students semantically correct response when the student "miscues" the word **rug** for **carpet:**

The teacher directs them to look at the books they have chosen and to pick the one they are probably going to read first. Marcia chooses **The Red Carpet.** When the teacher calls on her to read the title, she reads, "The Red Rug." The teachers calls on Sammy to tell the others what 'carpet' means. Sammy does not know or does not respond. The teacher says quite emphatically, "It means what Marcia said, The Red Rug!" (p.5)

Student self-initiated interaction with books. In classroom environments that are conducive to literacy learning, one frequently observes students initiating literacy activities for their own exploration and enjoyment. This occurs in supportive settings where children are encouraged to experiment with different kinds of literacy events, risk-taking is encouraged in the learning process, there is a print rich environment and peer support is allowed and facilitated. Kindergarten and preschool settings, more often than first or second grade settings in American schools are more likely to have this type of natural language environment. However, Harste et al. present a theoretically based view of the language arts curriculum in which "classrooms can be made to be natural language environments" (1984, p. 224). Children need to be able to practice literacy in social settings supportive of functional and purposeful uses of literacy. And to quote Edelsky and Draper, (1983):

> **every literacy event (i.e., every event using print) does not include an act of reading or writing;**
>
> **to be engaged in reading or writing, a person must be attempting to create an authentic text;**
>
> **to create an authentic written language text, a person must be creating meaning with cues from print that has the potential to be part of an authentic text;** (p. 8)

The incorporation of a Reading Center in one of the Extended Day Kindergarten classrooms, (Tucker School, 3/6/84), provided a physical context that was particularly rich in potential for facilitating student interactions with a focus on books and reading. Students were frequently observed in the "Reading Corner" to be handling and looking at the wide variety of books placed in that area. It was not uncommon to observe students seated in one of the two rocking chairs placed in the "Reading Corner" turning the pages of a book to the

accompaniment of their self-generated oral text as they role played "teacher reading aloud to the class." It is important to note that this kind of early reading contains many of the elements of genuine reading or an authentic encounter with text. We agree with Smith (1976) that from the time children intend to read by looking at print and searching for meaning, they are readers.

> On the sixth day of observation in the classroom, student interactions in the "Reading Corner" were closely observed. Adriana sits in the large rocking chair and "reads" aloud to her imaginary audience. The following sequence is from one of many observations of students in this class role playing "teacher reading aloud to students." Today Adriana is making up the text as she turns the pages in her book. She coordinates the text with the pictures in the book:
>
> The Indian took off his feathers.
> The sun and a little boy.
> He's playing with his bear.
> He's catching butterflies.
> He's catching a fish.
> He's signing.
> She's looking outside.
> Butterfly!
> They're all safe.
> They all fell.
> Blue pages. The end.
> (Tucker School, 3/6/84, p. 2)
>
> Adriana was apparently using the premise that one reads something every time one turns the page. The evidence for this may lie in the fact that when she came to the end of the story and turned to the blank blue pages (the heavy paper that attached the cover to the pages of the book) this signalled the end of the story. Adriana has been sitting in the large rocking chair as she "read". She has turned the pages, shown the pictures to her audience and matched the text she is "reading" to the pictures in the book. When she finishes the story she says: "Want me to read you another book?" The invisible audience apparently says yes because she continued with another book and another, more structured text:
>
> Mr. Chicken, would you give me something for my mom's birthday?
> Mr. Duck, would you give me something for my mom's birthday?
> [and so on to Mr. Goat, Mr. Sheep, Mr. Cow, using an exaggerated question intonation].

He's skipping and skipping.
He's looking for Mr. Bear.
He found Mr. Bear.
Mr. Bear, Mr. Bear,
The animals are staying over there!
(Tucker School, 3/6/84, pp. 5,6)

Adriana stops reading and leaves the rocking chair to select another book, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, and returns to sit in the rocking chair. Bennie enters the reading center. He picks up the book Adriana has just put down. He thumbs through the book and says, "That's a good picture for a Mom." Bennie takes the small rocking chair and pulls it over next to the large one where Adriana is sitting. Adriana holds her book so both can see it and they begin to "read" together. Rodolfo joins them, pulls up a chair and begins to "read" with them. When the three children have finished "reading" the story, Adriana points to each picture on the last pages and correctly identifies the animals.

This observation allowed the researchers to record students in self-initiated, functionally meaningful literacy activities. The important role of oral language in this literacy event is shown by the creation of an oral text that is coordinated with the pictures of the book. (At a "deeper" level of analysis there is even greater significance to the fact that this literacy event is an "oral" playlike event in the mind of the teacher; we will discuss later the issues involved in teacher attitudes and agendas regarding oral language versus literacy events). The second example, in contrast from the first "reading" example, shows a growing awareness of the child's part of the potential for written language discourse styles to vary considerably from those used in oral language interactive contexts. The first "reading" example indicates more of a contextualized, pointing-to-the-pictures style, one that could be called an eye-witness style of story telling (Bennett and Slaughter, 1983). The adoption of a "structured" story telling style doubtless stemmed from the teachers reading of structure books such as Brown Bear, Brown Bear, to the children. The physical

context created in the "Reading Center" plus the frequency and enthusiasm with this the teacher reads aloud to her class have been utilized by the students acting under their own volition. The children's appreciation of reading as a social event is evidenced by the fact that Adriana is joined by Bennie and Rodolfo in "reading."

Oral language interaction during informal versus formal instructional time. When children enter the classroom with something of high personal interest to share with the teacher or group, teachers generally allow or encourage spontaneous student talk. These spontaneous or informal speech events contained some of the most elaborated student discourse found in the data. Because a student had initiated the topics, he or she tended to take a leading role in the ensuing conversation. Student initiated topics also tended to present new information to the teacher or peers, thus establishing a functional basis for the conversation. These events were seen as "naturally" occuring by teachers, unpredictable, but beneficial to students and so teachers "made" time for their occurance. Often, teachers trained in the conventional skills approach to reading instruction, did not view literacy in quite the same way. Literacy to some teachers presents a "higher status" activity that children must do "the right way." There often seemed a dominant ontology or set of beliefs about literacy where convention, "standards" of spelling and language use, precision of interpretation (as if meaning were in the text), attention to surface structure both in reading and in writing, and a mystification of the writing process where children would learn to write perfect "copy" mainly by imitation. This seemed to permeate the literacy curriculum and prevented "risk-taking" by the teacher and hence by children within the formal instructional sequences in some classrooms.

This phenomenon is perpetuated not only by the skills based curriculum but also by the testing industry and the attempt in our culture to convert everything we possibly can into a technological linear order. For an extended discussion of the relationships between oral language and literacy and of how these issues pose problems for educators see Akinnaso (1981) and Stubbs (1980). Briefly, literacy is viewed by some as learned and used in a completely different way than oral language is learned and used. The whole language approach to instruction attempts to identify the explicit ways in which people learn and use written language in natural and functional contexts, therefore running counter to a view of literacy as a mysterious and artificially learned and used process. It may well be that the underlying belief that literacy use and learning is natural when it is a part of a functional social context, that permits a teacher to allow students to experiment and take risks in their own literacy development.

The following example of an informal student generated literacy event occurred when second grade students were entering the LECS room:

> A new group of students enters the LECS Center as the first group leaves. There is a brief period of movement and talk as the transition takes place. Both teachers are supportive of students throughout the transition. Mrs. Vega says, "O.K. everybody, turn around this way please." Students are seated on the rug. They comply quickly with the request and turn to sit facing Mrs. Vega. Israel has brought a copy of a magazine, "Four Wheels and Off Road," into the LECS center to share with the other students.
>
> Mrs. M: Does that come in the mail?
> Israel: No, my dad bought it for me last night.
>
> Students cluster around Israel, except two female students who sit outside the group around him but are politely attentive. Israel turns the pages of his magazine one at a time showing the students each and every page of the magazine. A longer time is spent looking at the pages with pictures than is spent on the pages without pictures. The students engage in a lively discussion that includes the cost and names of cars, where they've seen them, what they are used for and low riders. The three girls have apparently lost interest in the magazine as they are now looking at books from the book shelf.

> Five boys and two girls continue to demonstrate great interest in Israel's magazine. After about 10 minutes has been spent on this activity, the teacher says, "O.K. we're going to get started now," perhaps indicating the quasi-importance of the preceeding informal activity in the teacher's perception of the curriculum.
> (Tucker School, 1/10/84, pp. 4 & 5)

Oral language contexts facilitating interactive discourse. We have discussed the interaction between peers during the re-creating of the story, **The Little Red Hen,** in play form for a Reader's Theater. Also noted were the significant facilitating questions and responses of the teacher. At another site, in a pullout situation, the purpose and direction of the lesson are different and even though the activity structures included a short piece of writing, the major tasks were oral ones.

In a preliminary analysis of approximately four hours of observation and taping, we discovered a significant amount of oral language interaction. Though the amount of discourse on the student's part is still modest, the transitional whole language orientation of the teacher allows her to withdraw as primary facilitator for relatively long segments, and permits the students to build their utterances upon those of their peers similar to a model of oral language developed in the Kamehameha Early Education Program (Speidel, Gallimore, Jordan, Dowhower-Vuyk, Baird-Vogt & Tucker, 1982).

In the protocol segment below (Cobalt School, 1/23/85), the class (7 children) are talking about an impromptu trip they had taken to a park the day before. They are discussing it in order to give one of the children who hadn't gone a feeling for what had happened. Before this segment begins, they have already established that they had been given a free lunch. They, at this point,

aren't discussing their lunch experience. The vocabulary development is significant and it emerges not from a teacher's agenda to 'teach' contrasts between the concepts of lunch, breakfast, and snack, but from a need within the context of the conversation to explain and to understand themselves what they mean when they want to say something:

A: We came around. .
L: . . 'Bout 12, yeah.
T: What was so bad about What was so bad about coming at 12:00?
A: We forgot to eat lunch.
L: I ate lunch.
A: I ate lunch.
[Several children continue agreeing or disagreeing about eating lunch.]
A: We didn't.
L: I ate lunch. I ate two pieces o fpizza.
A: That's not lunch, tha's um, that's um. .
L: It's not by breakfast!
A: Yeah, it is.
L: No, it's not becuase I had two eggs. .
A: For breakfast? Well, there are other breakfasts.
[Short side comments about breakfast.]
L: . . milk. .
A: You have to have double breakfast.
T: What would you call something that you eat in the middle of the morning?
L: Snack.
S: Breakfast.
A: No, snack.
L: Snack, snack. [word play followed by giggles](p. 2)

In another segment, the class is discussing rules for keeping a dog or a puppy. (This is the written discourse aspect of the teacher's agenda.) Even though the teacher seems to have a pre-set notion of what she wants to come out of the discussion, (that dogs need shelter, not necessarily a doghouse), the entire conversation grows out of the formal writing lesson that has deep intrinsic interest for all of these children. Though initially formal, the functional aspects emerge from the oral language interaction.

Martin, the student described below, is not as talkative as Alfredo and Lupita have been in the protocol above and he is inclined not to answer the teacher's questions very quickly. Even though they begin with his reading of his 'rule,' he does not say anything for several minutes. Lupita and Alfredo are the ones responding to and expanding the teacher's questions. Lupita gives one of the most extensive responses that we have recorded in our data when she makes the connection between a dog living under a porch and a dog's shelter, (her grandmother's old car), that she knows from her own experience:

The children and their teacher are talking about whether you have to keep dogs in the house. Martin has just completed reading his 'rule' for keeping a puppy, "You have to put the dog in my home."

T: Do you have to keep them in a house? [There are several conflicting replies.]
T: [Repeats the question and Alfredo and Lupita go back and forth with 'no' and 'yes' in a way that seems to the observer that they are not serious about the conversation.]
T: [Repeats the question again.]
A: Because he doesn't (make it dirty?)
Adriana: No, you don't have to put a dog in your house.
Alfredo: You have to keep them in there until you build their house.
T: Oh, you need what for them?
L: A house.
Adriana: No.
T: Adriana says you don't even need a house. What do you need for them? Why do you give them a house? [The children hold by 'house' a little while longer.]
Alfredo: (So they won't freeze.) So they could sleep in there.
L: So they could clean their house.
T: Could they stay in a storage shed instead of a doghouse? [Several unclear responses] What is it that a doghouse does for them? It gives them a place to go when its. . .
Alfredo: Dark.
L: Raining.
T: When it's raining. Would a storage shed work?
Alfredo: It's going right through the roof.
T: Oh, my shed wouldn't be very good ( ) if the rain came through, would it, Alfredo? [Lupita thinks this is really funny.]

( ) Suppose you have a . . . What could you use instead of a doghouse? Suppose you have a porch ( ) and it has a place under the porch.. Could a dog live under the porch?

[Alfredo says "yes" and another student makes a freezing sound while saying, "no".]

T: Sure he could.

L: Like my tias puppy. She lives with my nana and um the doggie, they have a little chinghauai (chihuahua), their doggie, my nana's car has a hole, the one that's broken.

T: a huh. An old car's in her yard? .

L: Yeah and in the trunk, that's where he goes to sleep.

T: She goes in the car and goes to sleep . . .

L: My nana (locks or lets) her in there.

T: What does that do for the dog? It gives them a place to go in case it rains. It gives them a place to go in case it get very cold. (pp. 4-5)

After this interaction, during which Martin has said nothing, the teacher skillfully brings him back into the converation by saying, "So I think Martin is right. They need some kind of shelter." The following protocol segment illustrates the use of teacher wait time and individual focus that prevents other children from answering a directed question, thus allowing Martin the opportunity to become a full participant:

T: But I know where Martin keeps his puppy. Where do you keep your puppy Martin?

M: In my house.

T: [Repeats the response.] How is your puppy doing, Martin?

M: He doing fine.

T: Has he grown any?

M: He growing.

T: How tall is he now?

M: ( )

T: For those of you who don't know, Martin got a pit bull puppy for his birthday.

A: . . Did you?

T: And at Christmas time he had something awful happen. It got out of the yard. It was missing while Martin was on vacation for about 2 days. And in the meantime, Martin came home and they found it at Rodeo Park?

M: Uh uh.

T: Where did you find it?

M: At. . . [15 second teacher wait time.]
L: Kennedy Park.
T: Martin will tell us.
M: At the park where we play basketball. Me and my dad. That's where we found him.
T: You were really lucky.
M: He was in the ditch.
T: Had he found a safe place to be where the wind and the rain wouldn't get him?
M: He was in the tunnel.
T: ( ) That's good! That's a good doghouse. In the tunnel.
A: Un uh because when the rain goes through, it wash him away.
T: That wouldn't be very good. You were really lucky. Tell us again what your puppy's name is. [Short wait time]
M: My sister calls him Mr. T. (laughter)
T: What color is your puppy?
M: Brown and black. . mixed up.
T: Oh, you know what you call that color? [Martin shakes his head.] Brindle, brindle. .
L: Brindle.
T: I'll give you a new word, brindle. It sounds like Brenda. It almost looks like tiger stripes. ( )
T: Ah, Martin, what do you call your puppy? [beginning of a 20 second teacher wait time.]
A: What's his real name, for real? . . What's his name Martin? [Someone shushes Alfredo.]
M: Gypsy. (p.6)

If a teacher is not aware that she can be led by linguistically aggressive children like Alfredo and Lupita, more reticent participants will not get the crucial practice in thinking and responding. Alfredo and Lupita are allowed to participate in this last segment only when their contribution adds to the climate that makes it easier for Martin to continue the discussion. Lupita tries to answer for him, but is cut off by the teacher. Alfredo is shushed, but not by the teacher. She may have sensed that his question was contributing and reflective of his genuine interest in Martin's answer. This kind of interaction, emerging as it does from within the structure of a whole language curriculum, will allow Martin and children like him to build upon existing, but untapped oral language strengths.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

We have presented a number of classroom activity structures showing how children and teachers interactively create contexts for literacy practice, literacy and oral language demonstrations and language learning. Both Harste, et al. (1984) and Edelsky et al. (1983) write about the need to provide meaningful and thus supportive social and textual classroom environments for children to experiment with the various multimodal, multidimensional aspects of reading and writing. We have attempted to demonstrate, through our analysis and presentation of narrative accounts of classroom discourse during literacy events, that distinct alternatives are available for children, for their teachers, and for literacy learning in classrooms. These alternatives have serious implications for the child's growing sense of competency or failure as a member of a society that uses and regards literacy as an important, essential, and inescapable aspect of gaining acceptance and "full citizenship" as a participant. We have mentioned the need for teachers to provide supportive language and print rich environments for young children as they enter the more formal life of the school. We have also quoted research that very strongly recommends an approach to literacy instruction whereby the child, rather than the teacher, has to be the one to make the creative and risk-taking decisions about how to write something down on paper, how to generate a "new" text (whether this be oral or written), what something in print signifies in general and to oneself, and how to judge whether what one has said, written or thought, makes any sense. Then too, and just as important, children need to be able to tap into the aesthetic dimension of the "lived experiences" and "new insights or delights" facilitated by an active intellectual and imaginative engagement with literacy. The data presented

herein show how children are or are not making sense, and the extent to which they are able to become engaged in literacy events as aesthetic experiences within various classroom discourse contexts.

We selected for full presentation in this paper, data that mainly illustrate classroom literacy events or activity structures that suggest how whole language strategies, when implemented with some consistency in regards to theoretical assumptions, can result in meaningful literacy events for the student participants. We have indicated that for the most part literacy lessons must have functional meaning for the child in order for positive learning to occur, and that it is often useful to take an "inference ticket" from the society at large, and introspectively from ourselves as readers, writers, and communicative participants, in deciding what is a functional use of literacy. We did not focus this initial report of our data on the more narrow and often restrictive, skills lessons we sometimes observed, partly because we wanted to keep the length of the paper within reasonable bounds, but also because skills lessons have been presented and examined elsewhere (Harste et al., 1984).

Too often, practitioners and others unskilled or inexperienced in classroom observation, have thought that "all open-ended, creative and/or inquiry approaches to instruction are equal." The whole language approach to instruction is not a "non-method," rather it is an approach that acknowledges that true language learning and use, including writing and reading, is an "inventive" process (a term used by Charles Cooper, personal communication, 2/22/85; also see Bruner, 1983, on the history of research on language learning).

Through our data we have attempted to show how classroom environments and sociolinguistic contexts must be carefully planned and orchestrated by the teacher to facilitate whole language programs and productive literacy learning

beginning with the child's earliest entry into school. Our coding system may also be useful to those who want to clarify the distinguishing criteria between whole language based and skills based (or conventional) instruction. Harste (personal communication, 3/8/85) has indicated that there is need to develop evaluation strategies for whole language programs. These evaluation strategies are important for policy and administrative decision-making as well as for teachers' evaluations of instructional methods and student progress.

A great deal of "first" level protocol data has been presented in this paper, extending its length far beyond the typical, non-ethnographic research paper. We invite our readers to look at the data and agree, disagree, or reinterpret the meaning of the data for themselves and feel that this possibly is one of the advantages of ethnography. While we do not believe that the "data speaks for itself", we feel that descriptive data such as those in this report help to provide a context for other researchers and curriculum developers to reflect upon or reconsider assumptions about instruction. Perhaps in future reports we will include more contrasts of whole language with skills based instruction as our 'reading' of the larger data base indicates that low achieving children are not only failing to respond to skills based instruction, but are also learning dysfunctional notions about the process of literacy and about themselves as learners and thinkers. But that is another paper.

In this paper we mentioned that part of the problem of literacy instruction, when language is taught out of the context of its use, may be due to a phenomenon that could be called the "dead weight" of literacy. In this view written language is seen as sacrosanct, a "thing unto itself," with conventions that must be strictly adhered to not only in adult or professional use but from

the very beginning of school. Olson (1980) talks of the self-effacement of the writer/reader, which can be interpreted as a kind of mystique of essayist literature where some kind of absolute knowledge adheres to print. Perhaps teachers have been encouraged to "buy" into this view of literacy, in a non-reflective way, thus, preventing them from allowing children much room to invent or think for themselves within instructional modules. We have mentioned the importance of extending teacher wait time during interactive oral discourse. What needs mentioning is the importance of extending teachers' and principals' "wait" time for literacy learning as well. Children need time to think about what they want to write and how to write it, they need time to try out strategies that may or may not work, they need time to collaborate with peers on learning tasks, they need time to work through projects that take more involvement than a half an hour, they need time to listen to literature read to them, and they need time to produce whole texts, either through reading or writing. One reason we "risked" boring the readers with rather lengthy segments of protocol data, (and we severely reduced the amount of data that could have been presented), was that we hoped to convey something of the benefits to children of spending time in whole language activities.

In conclusion, we have presented a portion of what we feel is the "tip of the iceberg" of our data on early literacy activity structures in classrooms. The data were interpreted to explore the meaning of literacy from the viewpoint of the student and teacher participants and to take a "stab" at the meaning of various literacy events as a part of a teacher's agenda and working theory of literacy. The sociolinguistic literature has suggested that educators take a more deliberate look at interaction and oral communication participant structures

(Philips, 1972). In other words, we might improve the oral language communicative participation skills of some students by changing our traditional dominant teacher stance when interacting with students. Conversely, the whole language approach towards literacy suggests that we change the formal, decontextualized, and non-functional conventional approach to literacy instruction to a more natural learning environment. Both suggestions, adopting more egalitarian, culturally and ethnically appropriate oral language contexts and creating more functional, whole language literacy contexts for students, call for a great deal of teacher change in terms of knowledge base, teaching techniques, attitudes and interactional styles. It can only be attempted with the full cooperation and collaboration of classroom teachers.

Appendix A

CODES FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA ANALYSIS:

STUDY OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE TWO

Codes for Ethnographic Data Analysis:
Study of Oral and Written Language Development in K-2

Helen Slaughter

LITERACY*

L 1	L-Inv Wrtg/Rd	Inventing-exploring ones own method in writing or reading**
L 2	L-Patt Wrtg/Rd	Patterned language used in writing/reading.
L 3	L-Copy	Copying from written text
L 4	L-Env Prt	Using environmental print in writing or reading
L 5	L-Tasks func	Functional instructional tasks in literacy.
L 6	L-Tasks form	Formal instructional tasks in literacy
L 7	L-St Init	Student initiated literacy practice or behavior
L 8	L-DU-letr/snd	Discourse unit: indicate letters or sound
L 9	L-DU-wd	Discourse unit: word
L 10	L-DU-clause	Discourse unit: clause/sentence
L 11	L-DU-Ext St	Extended student discourse
L 12	L-Oral D, st/tch	Student initiated discourse about literacy
L 13	L-Oral D, tch/st	Teacher initiated discourse about literacy
L 14	L-Tch R & Q auth	Teacher's responses/questions: authentic
L 15	L-Tch R & Q Rit	Teacher's responses/questions: ritualized
L 16	L-Tch Mod +	Teacher modeling of a literacy behavior
L 17	L-Tch Mod -	Lack of teacher modeling of literacy
L 18	L-Peer D	Student's peer group discourse about written language
L 19	L-Sit con	Situational-contextual influence
L 20	L-Off Tsk	Off task behavior
L 21	L-On tsk	On task behavior

ORAL LANGUAGE INTERACTION*

O 1	O-Tasks	Tasks focusing on using oral language
O 2	O-Tch stud D	Sustained teacher-student topic talk
O 3	O-Stu elab D	Elaborated student discourse on a topic(s)
O 4	O-Stu init D/Q	Student iniated discourse or questions
O 5	O-St NR	Student non-response
O 6	O-Tch cont D	Teacher controlled/preformulated discourse
O 7	O-Tch NR	Teacher non-response
O 8	O-Tch wait	Teacher wait time
O 9	O-Contx In D+	Contexts facilitating interactive discourse
O 10	O-Contx In D-	Contexts not facilitating interactive discourse
O 11	O-Coop L +	Student cooperative learning
O 12	O-Coop L -	Student cooperative learning prohibited
O 13	O-Ch R	Choral response/recitation
O 14	O-Self	Student talks to self
O 15	O-Soc	Student socializing with peers
O 16	O-Off tsk	Off task behavior
O 17	O-On tsk	On task behavior

EVALUATION OF LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

E 1	E-Tch: W L +	Positive evaluation: criteria = whole language
E 2	E-Tch: W L -	Negative evaluation: criteria = whole language
E 3	E-Tch: skl +	Postitive evaluation: criteria = skills
E 4	E-Tch: skl -	Negative evaluation: criteria = skills
E 5	E-Tch: ind +	Indirect evaluation/expectation: positive
E 6	E-Tch: ind -	Indirect evaluation/expectation: negative
E 7	E-St: peer +	Student's positive evaluation of peer(s)
E 8	E-St: peer -	Student's negative evaluation of peer(s)
E 9	E-Mean lrn	Focus on meaning or learning process, e.g. helping students to reach the next step
E 10	E-Corr/conv	Focus on correctness/convention
E 11	E-Form/off	Formal/official external evaluation
E 12	E-Soc	Emphasis on socialization
E 13	E-S Inst Rules	Sociolinguistic rules during instruction
E 14	E-Act Les + T/S/E	Positive evaluation of activity or lesscn: teacher, student, ethn.
E 15	E-Act Les - T/S/E	Negative evaluation of activity or lesson: teacher, student, ethn.

*When behavior involves both literacy and oral language code LO.
** Distinguish between invented writing and spelling by indicating sp (if spelling).

revised 2/19/85 L&R A

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Appendix B

DEFINITIONS AND DISCUSSION OF SELECTED

CODES FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF PROTOCOL DATA

Definitions and Discussion of
Selected
Codes for Ethnographic Analysis of Protocol Data

Literacy Codes

L5 L-Tasks func **Functional instructional tasks in literacy.** These are defined as uses of print, either in writing, reading or sharing printed materials that are similar to the use people make of literacy outside of classroom contexts. Tasks coded as functional are assumed to be at the child's developmental level. We added the qualifier, developmental level, because an activity so coded must be interpretable as a functional or authentic use of literacy from the student's perspective. In other words, one can think of any number of uses of print that might be functional to some adult, but which would be meaningless to students in terms of their background knowledge, ability to deal with complex texts, etc. Harste et al. (1984) used the term real language situations in the way we refer to functional instructional tasks, as follows: "By real language situations we mean functional instances of language where all language systems (graphophonemic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) in the event are allowed to transact with the other communication systems (i.e., art, music, math, gesture, drama, etc.) which naturally co-occur in the setting (p.51)."

L6 L-Tasks form **Formal instructional tasks in literacy.** These are defined as tasks that are constructed for the purpose of enabling teachers to provide instruction, applications, or practice in literacy; these tasks are not ordinarily observed in contexts where people are using literacy skills outside of the classroom or formal educational requirements. Formal literacy events may or may not provide genuine or authentic experiences with text; they may involve language that is "whole," in the sense of retaining syntactic, semantic and pragmatic unity similar to "natural" language use,, or they may fragment the language into parts such as letters, sounds, words, etc. The coding system provides the option of coding the unit of language at a letter or sound level (L 8), a word level (L 9), or a clause/sentence level (L 10): the **naming** of the **activity structure** itself often precludes the necessity of coding at this detail and also allows for depiction of extended texts or narrative. Further, in formal instruction, language may be taught within some larger context or out-of-context.

Some classroom researchers, e.g. Grannis (1984), have analyzed classroom behavior stream operations according to cognitive functioning of students in different settings within the classroom day. According to Grannis (1984): "One sometimes does not know if cognitive organization is being attributed to the subject or to the activity structure that contains the behavior stream. This is a dilemma for ecological observation." Keeping this limitation in mind, Grannis' distinction among several cognitive categories may be useful in analyzing formal instructional tasks:

"Additive" means the cognizing of one thing, fact, or question after another, as in a recitation in which the organization of information over successive phases has not been made manifest. "Repetitive" applies when information and operations are repeated in successive phases, for example in writing ones name or the letter 'r' a number of times in succession. "Algorithmic" refers to the application of an algorithm in successive problems, for example addition problems or analogies, while "contingent" refers to phases in which the information and operations explicitly depend upon information and operation in prior phases. "Integrated," finally, means that the information and operations of a given phase are interdependent with information and operations of several other phases, for example in making a diorama or in writing a story. (p. 3)

L 14 L-Tch R & Q auth **Teacher's responses/questions: authentic.** There is a rich research literature stemming from sociolinguistic, process-product educational research studies, child language studies, early childhood education research and curriculum studies regarding the kind of language interaction that facillitates both concept development and language development. In this category, authentic teacher language, we have attempted to specify the indicators of genuine or authentic adult-child oral language interaction. The code is prefixed with L when the task is primarily one that concerns literacy and the O is used in strictly oral language interactions and/or tasks. The following items are indicators of authentic language use:

1. The teacher asks for real information from the student where there is a strong possibility that the student will supply information that is not already known by the teacher (this is in contrast to "known answer drills, as described by Ervin-Tripp, 1977). Wells (1981) has contrasted parent child interaction as involving requests for "new" information from the child whereas teachers often request information so that they can "evaluate" the cognitive correctness of the child's responses. Bronfenbrenner's (1974) research showed that sustained verbal interaction between parent and child resulted in significant longitudinal gain for children in preschool intervention programs, and the absence of this resulted in smaller or no gains.

2. The teacher responds to students replies in a manner that builds upon the students responses and results in sustained mutual dialogue about the topic under discussion. Wells et al, (1981) showed that the children of parents who were able to "build" upon the child's verbal responses had a higher level of language development. Slaughter and Bennett (1982) showed that teachers who responded to elicited student discourse with topic expanding or relevant information were more easily able to keep the conversation going and elicited longer and more syntactically and semantically complex discourse from students.

3. The teacher asks comprehensible questions within a coherent stream of discourse.

4. When ritualized language routines are used, they are appropriate to the linguistic and curriculum context: the purpose and/or routines of ritualized language are made clear and are used in a way that contributes to the self-confidence and communicative competency of the learner. An example of acceptable use of ritualized language may be found in the use of pattern books and big books (a separate code, L 2, Patterned language used in writing/reading, is used to indicate the use of this kind of ritualized language): a negative example would be didactic teacher controlled discourse used to publicize a student's lack of knowledge (this has sometimes been observed in mathematics lessons and may contribute to the phenomenon of math anxiety in our culture).

5. The discourse should exhibit a content, genre, and lesson objectives congruity; the purpose of teachers' elicitations and lessons should be made clear to the students. Both the language and knowledge base needed for comprehension should be within reach of the children. Some of the protocol data indicated a content-skills incongruity as when a lesson obstensively about a geographical region that was quite different from that of the students home state, which elicited a great deal of student verbal response, was actually a disguised attempt to teach punctuation.

The genre of the discourse should be appropriate to the lesson content: genre differences should be acknowledged and marked if necessary within the instructional module, or activity structure.

6. Teachers' questions and responses should be appropriate to the topic, and developmental level of the students. Many teachers do not listen to children's responses and appear to have a "mind-set" that is overly narrow in terms of acceptable responses. They seem not to be flexible in redirecting questions that give rise to misunderstandings or which are incomprehensible to the students. Sometimes teachers are so distracted by other groups in the classroom or interruptions that they do not provide "corrective" feedback to students, nor do they give clues or other kinds of help to individual students in problem solving. Often high achievers obtain this help, while low achievers do not obtain the help.

7. Teachers should provide some sustained oral language interactive discourse on an individual basis (several interactive turns of discourse) on a topic to assist students to develop cognitive and verbal skills. With low achievers it is especially important to attempt to find the student's zone of proximal development and to rephrase questions for students who tend to respond with minimal responses or "I don't know."

8. When students are not following explicit or implicit sociolinguistic "rules" in the classroom, the teacher should provide explicit teaching of these rules. Fivush (1983) has indicated that sociolinguistic performance rules, such as turn taking, are very important in teachers' overall evaluations of student academic performance.

Oral Language Interaction Codes

O 2 O-Tch stud D **Sustained teacher-student topic talk.** This code refers to sustained oral language interaction on an instructional topic between a teacher and one student, covering at least two or more turns at talking by the student. Another student may also enter the conversation, but the 'focal' student must be engaged in at least two uninterrupted exchanges on the same topic with the teacher.

O 3 O-Stu elab D **Elaborated student discourse on a topic(s).** We defined elaborated discourse as discourse occurring in a single turn that involved three or more clauses. (Slaughter, Bennett, Arrieta, Santa Ana-A, Garcia, & Prather, 1982)

O 6 L-Tch cont **Teacher controlled/performulated discourse.** This code refers to interactive discourse in which the teacher is the highly dominant speaker, essentially asking all the questions, requesting students to supply correct or convergent responses, eliciting one word or short syntactically simple responses and possibly evaluating students responses as good or correct. French and Maclure (1981) used the term performulation to describe teacher questions that directly elicit a highly content specific response from students, and the term reformulation when teacher feedback to incorrect responses increasingly narrows the range of acceptable responses. Cazden (in press) raised the issue of whether cognitively decreasing the response options of students in this manner is psychologically valuable or harmful for learning.

O 9 O-Contx In D+ **Contexts facilitating interactive discourse.** Contexts facilitating interactive discourse was defined as contexts where there was a great deal of verbal interaction between the teacher and students and/or among students. This was a wide ranging category covering whole segments of discourse and perhaps an entire activity structure. In interactive discourse we expect to see a variety of speech acts from students, and student responses of various lengths from the word or phrase level to the clause level and beyond.

O 10 O-Contx In D- **Contexts not facilitating interactive discourse.** These were contexts where there was little interactive discouse among the participants such as when talking is prohibited, or when there is one-way or highly controlled discourse dominated by the teacher.

O 17 O-Soc **Student socializing with peers.** This refers to student peer interaction that is not directly related to academic tasks or literacy but rather to children's own social concerns.

O 18 O-Off tsk **Off task behavior.** This refers to students being off task regarding the academic task expected in the classroom context.

O 19 On-tsk **On task behavior.** This is an optional code to be used in contrasting on and off task behavior when code O 18 is used.

Evaluation of learning and instruction codes

E 12 E-Soc **Emphasis on socialization.** This code is used when a participant emphasizes socialization in making an evaluative statement.

E 13 E-S Inst Rules **Sociolinguistic rules during instruction.** This code is used when rules relating to the sociolinguistic dimension of interaction are directly taught or appealed to during instruction.

Appendix C

ACTIVITY STRUCTURE CODING SHEET

Activity Structure Coding Sheet

Number— Page__

Setting: Site Code:

Participants:

Grade: Date: Time Span:

Stream of events and/or Activity Stuctures CODES: Remarks

Part 2

Ethnographic Summary: Note important points, interpretations, or discrepancies between the Activity Structure Coding Sheet and the ethnographer's summary, e.g. omissions, alternate interpretations, etc.

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE ADEQUACY OF THE CODING SYSTEM, COMMENTS ABOUT THE ADEQUACY/COMPLETENESS OF THE DATA SAMPLE CONCERNING A SPECIFIC EVENT, PATTERNS DETECTED, ETC.

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